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Lysistrata: by  
Aristophanes: Adapted  
and arranged by  
Winifred Ayres Hope

Samuel French: Publisher

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## ARISTOPHANES.

The works of Aristophanes are the only Greek comedies which have been preserved. Without doubt, the best of these are among the world's greatest masterpieces. The "Lysistrata" may be taken as one of the earliest satirical thrusts at feminism; but its good-humor, its essentially comic spirit, take it out of the realm of the purely didactic and topical.



## LYSISTRATA.

An acting version of Aristophanes' brilliant satire on Athenian foibles, with strikingly modern features. It may be called a Peace Play, a Feminist Play, or an argument for Woman Suffrage.

This is a prose adaptation, but the choruses are versified with some suggestion of Aristophanes' varied metre.

The speaking parts are 4 male, 5 female, 1 young child; there is a chorus of old men, and one of Greek matrons, about 15 in each, although the number may be varied.

The text is accompanied with directions for acting, suggestions for stage-setting, and a full outline of an effective color-scheme for costuming.

Adapted and arranged by Winifred Ayres Hope.

Great liberties have been taken with Aristophanes, the aim being to suggest his colloquial manner and—in the versified portions—his varied metre. An effort has been made to preserve the spirit of the original throughout, despite the changes necessary to adapt this play to our modern canons of taste.

The scene represents Athens in the Fourth century B. C.

Stage-setting: the scene represents the steps leading up to the Acropolis, the gates of which show in the distance. This could be sufficiently conveyed by two or three broad steps at the back of the stage, with a background of pillars, severe in style, supporting rude gates; the chorus could then be massed on the main stage. Three entrances are desirable; one through the gates, and a Right and Left in the wings.

## LYSISTRATA.

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### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LYSISTRATA  
CALONICE  
MYRRHINA ..... *Athenian matrons.*  
LAMPITO..... *A matron of Sparta.*  
CINESIAS..... *Husband to Myrrhina.*  
ATHENIAN COMMITTEE-MAN  
AMBASSADOR FROM SPARTA  
CHORUS OF MEN  
CHORUS OF WOMEN  
A CHILD.  
Three Policemen

Aristophanes represents Lysistrata as no longer young, but nothing in the text as rendered prevents her being youthful, and she should be handsome. In the same way, the women of the chorus may be represented as young and charming. The men of the chorus should be old in the main, as much of the fun depends upon this; the younger men are supposed to be in the ranks. Myrrhina is of course an ingenue part and Cinesias "juene premier." The Athenian Committee Man can be made very pompous and amusing and the Spartan Herald ridiculously stilted.

## Suggestions for costuming: outline of color-scheme.

The women should wear the classic Greek costume, consisting of tunic, mantle, girdle and sandals; variety may be introduced in the adjusting of the girdle, and in the employment of contrasting colors, as follows.

Lysistrata: white tunic and mantle, latter with heavy gold border, girdle, sandals, arm-rings and fillet of gold.

Calonice: tunic pale blue, mantle sky blue with border of silver.

Lampito: corn-colored tunic, mantle of poppy-red with yellow border.

Mysilene: tunic white, mantle shell-pink with border of silver, ~~and arm-rings silver~~.

Chorus of Women: shades of burnt orange, yellow and brown in different combinations; touches of flame-color used with caution.

The men wear the full-length tunic, with the exception of the Herald and Cinesias, who wear the knee-length tunic. The following combination of colors is suggested for the men's costumes:

Cinesias: corn-colored tunic, mantle of orchid-red.

Athenian Committee-Man: tunic, Helen pink, mantle dregs of wine.

Spartan Ambassador: tunic of lavender, mantle purple, with silver border.

Herald: deep blue tunic, mantle black and silver, staff and trumpet of silver.

Chorus of men: harmonizing shades of green (avoiding the vivid tones): black used sparingly in the borders.

Properties: braziers for the chorus of men; pitchers for the women; basket of wool, beans, bonnet for Lysistrata; staff and trumpet for Herald.

# LYSISTRATA

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(*The scene discloses LYSISTRATA alone on the steps of the ACROPOLIS.*)

LYSISTRATA. Well! were it a dinner or dance to which I had bidden them, the women had come swarming; but not a single woman is present—(*she sees CALONICE approaching*) save my neighbor here. Welcome, Calonice!

(*Enter CALONICE.*)

CALONICE. And you too, Lysistrata! What! Are you troubled? Be not of a sad countenance, child! it does not become you to frown.

LYSISTRATA. I am greatly vexed on account of us women; men have so poor an opinion of us.

CALONICE. Well, perhaps we deserve it.

LYSISTRATA. I suspect as much; for when I summon them to consult about no small matter, they sleep, and have not come.

CALONICE. But my dearest, they will come. Of a truth, women find it difficult to get out; for one gets into an argument with her husband, another has to waken the servant; this one has yet to put

her child to bed, that one has to bathe hers; and still another has to see that her child is fed.

LYSISTRATA. But indeed, there were other matters for them more important than these.

CALONICE. What is the matter, dear Lysistrata, for which you summon us women?

LYSISTRATA. A weighty matter! There is a certain subject which I have investigated, and spent sleepless nights revolving in my mind.

CALONICE. Doubtless the matter revolved is somewhat subtle?

LYSISTRATA. Ay! so subtle that the safety of Greece depends upon us women.

CALONICE. Upon the women? Why, it depends upon a slight thing then.

LYSISTRATA. Since the affairs of the State depend upon us, either all Greece rushes to her fall, or we shall save Greece in common.

CALONICE. What prudent or brilliant action could women accomplish? we who sit decked out, wearing saffron-colored robes, and beautified, and wearing loose Cimmerian vests and sandals?

LYSISTRATA. Nay, in truth these are the very things which I expect will save us; the little saffron-colored robes, and the unguents, and the transparent vests.

CALONICE. In what manner, pray?

LYSISTRATA. So that none of the men of the present day lift a spear against each other.

CALONICE. Then by the two goodesses, I'll get me a saffron robe dyed!

LYSISTRATA. Nor take a shield.

CALONICE. I'll put on a Cimmerian vest!

LYSISTRATA. Nor little sword.

CALONICE. I'll get sandals!

LYSISTRATA. Ought not then the women to have been present?

CALONICE. They should have come flying long ago.

LYSISTRATA. Nay my dear, you'll find them throughout Attica doing everything later than they ought. No woman is here from the sea-coast, nor from Salamis.

CALONICE. But see, now, here are some coming!

(Enter MYRRHINA, L.)

MYRRHINA. Surely we have not come too late, Lysistrata? What do you say? why are you silent?

LYSISTRATA. I do not commend you, Myrrhina, who have only now come about so important a matter.

MYRRHINA. I had great difficulty in finding my girdle in the dark. But if it be very pressing, tell it to us now we are present.

LYSISTRATA. No, by Zeus! let us rather wait a little while for the women from Boeotia to come, and from the Peloponnese.

MYRRHINA. That is good advice. But see, here comes Lampito!

(Enter LAMPITO, R. with two others; LYSISTRATA goes up to her.)

LYSISTRATA. O dearest Laconian! welcome Lam-

pito! How your beauty, dearest, shines forth!  
What a fresh color you have; how vigorous your  
body is! you could even throttle a bull!!

LAMPITO. I think as much, by the two goddesses!  
We Spartan women exercise faithfully each day.

LYSISTRATA. (*Turning her around*) And what a lovely figure!

LAMPITO. Upon my word, you measure my good points, as if I were a heifer for sacrifice!

LYSISTRATA. But from what country comes your companion?

LAMPITO. By the two gods, a Boeotian of rank is coming to you.

LYSISTRATA. Welcome, O shapely Boeotian! and who is the other?

LAMPITO. A very proper girl, even if she is from Corinth. But who brought together this company of women?

LYSISTRATA. I here!

CALONICE. Then say to us what you wish.

LYSISTRATA. Yes, by Zeus, my dear woman, that will I!

MYRRHINA. Mention the 'important business,' whatever this is.

LYSISTRATA. I will now mention it, but first I will ask you this small question.

MYRRHINA. Whatever you please.

LYSISTRATA. Do you not long for the fathers of your children, who are absent on military service?

for I well know that almost every mother's daughter of you has her husband abroad.

CALONICE. In truth, my husband has been absent, O unhappy man, five months in Thrace.

LAMPITO. And mine, seven whole months in Pylos.

CALONICE. And mine, even if he ever does depart from the ranks takes up his shield, flies off and disappears!

LYSISTRATA. But not even a spark of a lover is left; for, since the Milesians betrayed us, I have not seen a thing of the kind, which might have consoled us in the absence of our husbands. Would you be willing, therefore, with me to put an end to the war, if I were to find a way?

MYRRHINA. Yea, by the two goddesses, I would be willing, if I were obliged to pawn this tunic!

CALONICE. I would pawn myself!

LAMPITO. I would climb the steep sides of Mount Taygetus, if from there I could get a glimpse of peace.

LYSISTRATA. Then I will venture, for the matter is urgent. We, O women, if we are to compel the men to be at peace, must—

MYRRHINA. What? Tell us!

LYSISTRATA. Will you do it then?

MYRRHINA. We will do it, even if we must die!

LYSISTRATA. Then must we leave home and husband! Why do you turn away from me? Where are you going? Here, women, why do you compress your lips and shake your heads at me? why

is your color changed? why are you weeping? Will you do it, or will you not do it? or what do you purpose to do?

MYRRHINA. I cannot do it! let the war go on!

CALONICE. Neither can I, by the great Zeus! let the war go on!

LYSISTRATA. You say this, you who were ready to pawn yourself.

CALONICE. Anything else, anything else! whatever you wish! I am willing to walk even through fire, if I must; but not what you ask!

LYSISTRATA. (*To Myrrhina*) What then do you say?

MYRRHINA. I too will walk through fire.

LYSISTRATA. O how weak is our sex! No wonder we inspire the poets to tragedies. But my dear Lampito, vote with me! for if only you side with me, we may yet save the state.

LAMPITO. It is hard indeed; yet still we must do it, for there is great need of peace.

LYSISTRATA. O thou dearest! and the only woman out of these!

CALONICE. Would peace be made aught the more for this?

LYSISTRATA. Aye, much, by the two goddesses! For if we cast eyes of love upon them, and then flout them—they will quickly make peace, I well know.

LAMPITO. They tell us that Menelaus, after one glance at Helen, seeking to cajole him, threw away his sword.

MYRRHINA. But what, my friends, if our husbands leave us?

LYSISTRATA. They are never with us as it is.

CALONICE. But what if they beat us?

LYSISTRATA. Still be obstinate, and their joy will vanish. Love and force go never hand in hand; and no man can be really happy, unless the woman be happy too.

CALONICE. If in truth you two are decided about this, we also agree.

LAMPITO. And so we will everywhere persuade our husbands to keep peace without deceit. Yet how can we persuade the foolish Athenians not to talk nonsense?

LYSISTRATA. We of course will persuade our party.

LAMPITO. Not so long as the triremes stand ready, and there is that huge war-fund unspent in the temple of the goddess.

LYSISTRATA. Ah, but this is provided for; to-day we shall seize upon the Acropolis.

CALONICE. The plan seems a wise one.

LYSISTRATA. Why then, Lampito, do we not swear to these things as soon as possible, so that we can not change our minds?

CALONICE. Produce the oath that we may swear.

LYSISTRATA. Good! Where is the police-woman? Set the shield before us.

CALONICE. Lysistrata, whatever is the oath we are to swear?

LYSISTRATA. What? Why we will swear upon a shield.

MYRRHINA. O Lysistrata, dearest, let us not swear anything about peace upon a shield!

LYSISTRATA. Well, how shall we swear?

MYRRHINA. Well, if we could get a white horse from somewhere and sacrifice it—

LYSISTRATA. And why, pray, a white horse?

CALONICE. O dear, how can we swear!

LYSISTRATA. Now listen, and I will tell you. Let some one bring a large cup, and then we will slaughter a Thacian jar of wine, and swear over the cup—to pour no water in!

LAMPITO. An oath after my own heart!

*(A cup and jar are brought.)*

CALONICE. O dearest woman! what a vast jar! what a pious oath this will be!

LYSISTRATA. Mistress Persuasion, O Cup sacred to friendship, bless our oath being friendly to the women.

*(CALONICE pours wine into the cup.)*

CALONICE. It is well omiened.

MYRRHINA. And of sweet savor.

LYSISTRATA. Permit me, women, to swear the first. *(She tries to drink from the jar)*

CALONICE. You shall not unless the lot falls to you!

LYSISTRATA. Lampito, do all of you lay hold on the cup and let one speak for all of you, and do you

all swear these things, and abide by them.

'Till peace is voted by the State,'

CALONICE. 'Till peace is voted by the State,'

LYSISTRATA. 'And stilled are war's alarms.'

CALONICE. (*Repeats*)

LYSISTRATA. 'My lord shall miss his faithful mate,'

CALONICE. (*Repeats*)

LYSISTRATA. 'Nor clasp her in his arms.'

CALONICE. (*Repeats*)

LYSISTRATA. 'When grief and longing grow too great,'

CALONICE. (*Repeats*)

LYSISTRATA. 'For my connubial charms.'

CALONICE. (*Repeats*)

LYSISTRATA. 'His wife he then may re-instate.'

CALONICE. (*Repeats*)

LYSISTRATA. 'By laying down his arms.'

CALONICE. (*Repeats*)

LYSISTRATA. Do you all swear?

THE WOMEN. Yea by the great Zeus!

LYSISTRATA. Come, let us dedicate this.

CALONICE. Your share only, my dear, that from the first we may be friends.

(*The goblet is passed; there is a shout of WOMEN off stage.*)

LAMPITO. What shout is that?

LYSISTRATA. The very thing I spoke of! for the women have already seized upon the Acroplois of the gates.

CALONICE. Do you not think that the men will immediately render joint aid against us?

LYSISTRATA. I care little for them, for they will not come with either so great threats or so much fire as to open these gates, except upon the terms which we mentioned.

(THE WOMEN enter the ACROPOLIS, and bar the gates. Enter the chorus of old men, bearing logs and charcoal braziers.)

FIRDEM ——————

Onward, Ducas, do not tarry,  
Tho' your poor joints creak and crack  
With the heavy logs you carry  
On your sore and aching back.

SECOND OLD MAN.—

Life is full of sad surprises—  
This one nearly knocks me flat!  
Women whom each man despises,  
Good for naught but idle chat,  
Money wasters, dainty tasters,  
Always seeking Tit for Tat—  
*They have seized the sacred statues!*  
*They have barred the temple gate*  
Wait and see what we'll heave at you!  
Then you may repent—too late!

FIRST OLD MAN.—

Here we'll build ourowering prye—  
Zeus! my coals are nearly dead.  
Here you, Dracas! blow the fire

(*Blow at coals.*)

(Ugh! you'll choke me out instead!)  
If they'll not undo the portal

(*Blow coals.*)

(Ugh! Kchu! this wretched smoke!)  
Light the pyre, and if they're mortal

(*Blow at coals.*)

(Ugh! Kchu! I'll surely choke!)  
We will show who's really master  
Goddess victory be ours  
Shield us from th' fell disaster  
And we'll wreath your fane with flowers.

(CHORUS OF WOMEN *come through gate with  
witchers.*)

FIRST WOMAN.—

Fly! Fly! the smoke rounts high!  
Fire! Fire! it lights the sky!  
Laws so base, a grievous base  
Men who would our sex disgrace.

SECOND WOMEN.—

Late! Late! a cruel fate  
Were it true of which they rate;  
Men! Men ten times ten,  
Helli us in a flaming pen!

THIRD WOMEN.—

Here! Here! sisters dear  
 Lo! we come with water clear.  
 Pallas true, we worship you;  
 You we'd save and Athens too.  
 City of the Golden crown  
 Never less grow thy renown!  
 War-crazed man would tear thee down;  
 We will save our ancient town.

CHORUS OF MEN.—

O bless my poor eyes! another surprise!  
 The women come swarming, of each age and size.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.—

You think you can laugh! 'Tis no subject for chaff!  
 You see but the van-guard, by no means a half.

CHORUS OF MEN.—

Your boldness is such, you're taking too much;  
 Let me close your mouth with a vigorous touch!

CHORUS OF WOMEN.—

Little we care; strike if you dare!

CHORUS OF MEN.—

Euripides of mighty fame,  
 Gave women all a fearful name:  
 Said he, "No sex so void of shame."

LEADER OF CHORUS OF WOMEN.—

To make this the truer,  
 Pray take up your ewe,

(WOMEN & seize their pitchers.)

LEADER OF MEN.—

O what will you do with water, pray?

LEADER OF WOMEN.—  
And you with fire, my good friend, say?  
LEADER OF MEN.—  
A taste of fire may make you sane.

(All the MEN wave braziers.)

LEADER OF WOMEN.—  
A dash of water clears the brain.

(The WOMEN splash water from pitchers on the  
MEN, then run away through the gates. Enter  
COMMITTEE-MAN L.)

COMMITTEE-MAN. What has come over the  
women? They are all astir through the city.

LEADER OF MEN. Had you but seen their treat-  
ment of us!

COMMITTEE-MAN. 'Tis our own fault; we have  
humored and spoiled them. And this is my reward!  
I, a committee-man, shut out from the Acropolis,  
where lies our precious war-fund! But let us not  
stand and gape at them. Bring hither the levers.  
So—you force on that side, and I on this. (Business  
with crow-bars)

(Enter LYSISTRATA from the citadel, attended by  
several WOMEN.)

LYSISTRATA. Nay, spare your levers. I am  
coming forth of my own accord. There is not so  
much need of levers, as of sense and judgment.

COMMITTEE-MAN. What is this base creature? Where is the policeman? Seize her and tie her hands behind her.

LYSISTRATA. By Artemis! let him lay but the tip of his finger on me! he shall weep for it—policeman as he is!

(*The POLICEMAN draws back.*)

COMMITTEE-MAN. Are you afraid, you fellow? Cannot you—and you too help him—seize and bind her.

FIRST WOMAN. Try it, and you shall be trampled on!

COMMITTEE-MAN. Where is a third policeman? Bind this one first (*Points to FIRST WOMAN*); she talks too much!

SECOND WOMAN. Touch her, I say, and you'll soon need a doctor!

COMMITTEE-MAN. What's this? Here, here, I need a policeman! lay hold on her! (*To POLICEMAN*) I'll stop some of you from running away!

THIRD WOMAN. Try it, I say, any of you, and I'll make you scream.

(*POLICEMEN run away, R.*)

COMMITTEE-MAN. Now I am in hard luck! The policemen have all deserted. We must never let women get the best of us! (*The MEN come back*) Let us march against them, policemen, in order of battle.

LYSISTRATA. Have a care! for look you, there are four companies of war-like women within there (*Gestures towards citadel*) fully armed.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Twist back their hands, policemen!

(POLICEMEN *lay hands on the WOMEN.*)

LYSISTRATA. My sisters in arms, come out; ye market women, who sell fresh vegetables; ye gracious hostesses, who furnissh bread and garlic to the traveller. Come, push, smite! use strong blows and strong words, and show no respect for persons, (*The WOMEN rush in, and drive off the POLICEMEN*) There, that will do; we will not demolish them utterly.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Upon my word, you women have certainly gotten the best of my policemen!

LYSISTRATA. Well, what did you expect? Did you think us slave-women? or perhaps you thought women could not get angry?

COMMITTEE-MAN. I've seen them often enough—especially when there is a tavern near-by!

LEADER OF MEN'S CHORUS. O committee-man of this land, you have wasted many words; for what is the use of holding a parley with wild beasts? See how they have treated us! we've had a regular bath —except for the soap!

LEADER OF WOMEN'S CHORUS. Well, what do you expect—when you lay hands upon your neighbors—but a black eye? For I would sit here, as de-

mure as a Maiden, offending no-one, and as still as a mouse, unless some-one went out of his way to irritate me.

FIRST OLD MAN.—

Zeus! how can we tame these monsters?  
Wrongs like these we can not bear!  
Come, let's learn the cause that drove them  
All these heinous deeds to dare.

SECOND OLD MAN.—

Yea, on our citadel basely they seized,  
With our Acropolis did as they pleased;  
Sacred enclosures by them were profaned;  
What was the reason? 'tis time they explained.

THIRD OLD MAN.—

Ask not once, but once and again;  
Quiz them well, and spare no pain;  
Stint no effort till all is plain;  
Shame would smirch us were queries vain.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Well, I wish to know this first from you, with what intent you shut up our citadel with your bolts?

LYSISTRATA. That we might make the money safe, and that you might not fight on account of it.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Why? are we fighting on account of the money?

LYSISTRATA. Aye! That those in office may steal, there must be a war-fund; and to raise a war-fund, there must be a war. But we decree that no one shall touch this money.

COMMITTEE-MAN. What will you do then?

LYSISTRATA. We will manage it.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Will you manage the money?

LYSISTRATA. Why do you think this strange?

Do we not wholly manage your domestic property  
for you also?

COMMITTEE-MAN. But the case is not the same.

LYSISTRATA. How, not the same?

COMMITTEE-MAN. We must carry on the war  
out of this money.

LYSISTRATA. But in the first place, there is no  
occasion for war.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Why, how otherwise shall we  
be saved?

LYSISTRATA. We will save you.

COMMITTEE-MAN. You?

LYSISTRATA. Ay, we, to be sure.

COMMITTEE-MAN. A sad case indeed.

LYSISTRATA. Be assured that you shall be saved,  
even if you do not wish.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Even if I don't wish?

LYSISTRATA. Ay, so much the more for that matter.

COMMITTEE-MAN. But how came you to care  
about peace and war? Tell me quickly, that you  
may not get a beating.

LYSISTRATA. Hear now, and try to restrain your  
hands.

COMMITTEE-MAN. But I cannot! you get me in  
such a temper!

LYSISTRATA. Then it will be so much the worse for you.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Prate not your advice to me but on with your story!

LYSISTRATA. I will proceed to tell it. During the former war, through our modesty we bore with you men, whatever you did, for you did not allow us to mutter; but we were far from satisfied. Still we understood you very well, and often times when we were at home we used to hear that you had determined some important matter badly and then though much upset about it we used to ask you with a smile, "Well, what did you decide to-day in council? What will you post up on the pillar about peace?" "What's that to you?" the men used to say. "Will you not be silent?" We used to be silent.

CALONICE. But I would never have been silent.

COMMITTEE-MAN. You'd soon be whimpering if you were not silent.

LYSISTRATA. So then I kept silent at home. We used to hear perhaps of some other disastrous decree of yours, and then we used to ask "How is it, husband, that you manage these matters so foolishly?" But he, having looked askance at me, used immediately to tell me "mind your weaving, or you'll regret it; but war shall be a care to man!"

COMMITTEE-MAN. Rightly said of him, by Zeus!

LYSISTRATA. How, rightly, you wretch? For you made a mess of things; and even then you wouldn't let us advise you. But now it has come to

this; we hear you say openly in the streets "Is there not a man in the country?" and the answer is "Not one." Therefore we women assembled and agreed to save Greece in common. For why ought we to wait? If you in your turn will hear us, giving good advice, and will keep silent as we did so long, we can save you.

COMMITTEE-MAN. *You save us?* You mention a shameful case, and not to be endured by us.

LYSISTRATA. Hold your tongue.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Must I hold my tongue for you, you abominable creature and that too wearing a *hood*? Then may I not live!

LYSISTRATA. Well if the hood bothers you, take it and wear it, and then hold your tongue! and here, take this little basket! put on a girdle, and card wool, munching beans! but war shall be a care to women! (*LYSISTRATA puts a hood on the COMMITTEE-MAN and a girdle, and thrusts a basket in his hands*)

#### CHORUS OF WOMEN.—

Come, Women, with your pitchers,  
We'll aid this noble dame;  
Whole-hearted we and tireless,  
We'll win a glorious name.  
With us is virtue, beauty,  
Courage and wisdom deep,  
And prudent patriotism;  
Our zeal shall never sleep.

#### LYSISTRATA.—

What though Eros be our master?

What though Venus, Cyprus-born,  
 Breathe upon us love and beauty,  
 Making all *man*-kind love-lorn?  
 Yet shall Greeks proclaim us women  
 Saviors of the sovereign state;  
 "Peace-makers" our worthy title,  
 Triumphing o'er war and hate!

COMMITTEE-MAN. How then will you accomplish this?

LYSISTRATA. In the first place, we shall put a stop to people lounging in the market-place, with arms, and acting like fools.

CALONICE. Aye, by the Paphian Venus!

LYSISTRATA. For now the rowdies strut through the pottery-market, and the vegetable-market, armed to the teeth.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Aye, by Zeus! for thus it becomes a hero.

LYSISTRATA. It is a ridiculous custom, this arming oneself with shield and helmet, to purchase a mackerel!

CALONICE. Yet it has its advantages; for I saw a cavalry-captain in the market the other day, astride his horse, and drinking pea-soup out of his helmet!

MYRRHINA. And I saw a wild Thracian shaking shield and javelin like a very Tereus at a market-woman; the poor old soul was so scared that she let him take all the ripe figs!

COMMITTEE-MAN. (*Impatiently*) Come, come, tell me how you will be able to settle our troubles?

LYSISTRATA. Very easily.

COMMITTEE-MAN. How, show us.

LYSISTRATA. Like as when our thread is tang'led, we take it in this way (*Illustrating with her hands*) and draw it out with our spindle hither and thither, thus also will we put an end to this war, if you let us, having prepared the way by means of embassies hither and thither.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Do you think, pray, to ally a dreadful state of affairs with your wool and thread and spindles, you silly creature?

LYSISTRATA. Aye, and if there were any sense in you, you would administer all your affairs after the fashion of our wool.

COMMITTEE-MAN. How pray? let us see.

LYSISTRATA. Well, first we wash out the dirt from a fleece; so should you flog the knaves headlong out of the city: then we pick out the briers; so should you remove the trouble-makers: then we pull apart the matted wool; so should you break up the cliques who combine for their own aggrandizement: then we card the even wool into a basket; so should you foster civic pride and general good-will among the citizens, the aliens, and the strangers: not content with a united city, you should consider the colonies—let them not lie apart like neglected and useless lumps of wool, but card them into a unified state. Then from this homogeneous wool, weave you a cloak for the people.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Oh, it is shameful that these women should spin such yarns, who had no concern in the war!

LYSISTRATA. And yet, ungrateful wretch, we bear more than twice as much of it as you; we who first bear sons, and then send them forth—to die.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Silence! and do not remind us of our woes.

LYSISTRATA. And then when we ought to be cheered, and enjoy our youth, we are left alone, on account of the wars. But it is even more grievous for the maidens, who grow old unwed.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Does not a man grow old as well?

LYSISTRATA. Ah! it is not the same. For he, when he comes back, even though he be grown gray, soon marries a young girl. But the maid who has waited too long, can only sit and read the dreambook.

COMMITTEE-MAN. When they grow old, let them die.

LYSISTRATA. Then why do you not die? You shall have a little pig; you shall purchase a coffin; I will now knead you a honey-cake. Take this, and crown yourself! (*Splashes him with water from the pitcher*)

FIRST WOMAN. And receive these from me.

(*Splashes him with water from her pitcher*)

SECOND WOMAN. And take this crown. (*Same business*)

LYSISTRATA. What is wanting? What do you wait for? Go to the ship! Charon calls you, and

you hinder him from setting sail. (*They hustle him and jostle him*)

COMMITTEE-MAN. Is it not shameful that I should suffer these things? But by Zeus, I will show myself to the Committee, just as I am. (*Exit COMMITTEE-MAN L.*)

LYSISTRATA. (*Calling after him*) I suppose you will enter a complaint against us, that we did not lay you out. Never mind: we will not forget the sacrifices for the dead; we will send them at dawn on the third day! (*LYSISTRATA disappears into the Acropolis*)

FIRST OLD MAN.—

Come, free men, rouse awake!  
Some drastic action take!  
For hist! I scent a plot:  
The Spartans (Pray, why not?)  
Have worked these creatures frail  
(The thought makes me turn pale)  
'Til they have grown so 'bold.  
They've seized our precious gold!

SECOND OLD MAN.—

Hark, how they prattle of helmet and shield!  
And laugh at the hero who weapons would wield.  
Yea, Athens with Sparta they'd fain reconcile:  
As well trust a wolf who is feigning a smile.

THIRD OLD MAN.—

Tyrants, tyrants are they, sirs!  
Athens once her tyrants slew;  
Aristogeton am I—  
Hippias shall die anew! (*Aims blow at WOMEN*)

FIRST OLD WOMAN.—

Have a care, my good sir, for I can strike too.  
We'll put down our pitchers and reason with you.  
I honor the state, and would fain see her thrive;  
She owes me a hearing, for look! man alive,  
You eat up her income, nor add to the store;  
I give what she prizes a hundred times more  
Than war-funds or levies—for I give her *men!*  
Yet you make the statutes; nine times out of ten  
You run us in dangers that threaten our fall  
The grievance is ours, and not yours at all!

FIRST OLD MAN.—

Ne'er heard I insolence like this!  
It waxes more and more:  
Come, brothers, strip you for the fray  
As in the days of yore.  
For should these hussies get the lead,  
They'll rule on land and sea;  
On foot or horse they'll take the field,  
And vanquish you and me!

FIRST OLD WOMAN.—

Hussies are we? We can fight,  
We can hit and we can bite.  
Exercise your manly might!  
On our side is truth and right.

(*Re-enter LYSISTRATA from the ACROPOLIS*)

CALONICE. Oh, thou authoress of this deed and design, why hast thou come with a sad countenance?

LYSISTRATA. The changeableness of women makes me down-hearted.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. What do you say? what do you say?

LYSISTRATA. The truth! the truth!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. What is there alarming? do not conceal it from your friends.

LYSISTRATA. But I am ashamed to confess it. The women want to return.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Oh, Zeus!

LYSISTRATA. Why call on Zeus? It is so. They are escaping by stealth. And they keep making all sorts of excuses so as to depart home. There is one more! (*A WOMAN tries to run past*) Hello you! Whither are you running?

FIRST WOMAN. I wish to go home; for my Mile-sian fleeces are being destroyed by the moths at home.

LYSISTRATA. What moths? Go back again.

FIRST WOMAN. But I will return immediately, when I have spread them out on the couch.

LYSISTRATA. You shan't spread them out, or depart at all!

FIRST WOMAN. But must I let the fleeces be ruined?

LYSISTRATA. Yes, if necessary.

(*A second WOMAN comes out.*)

SECOND WOMAN. Ah me! miserable! miserable for my flax, which I have left at home unhacked.

LYSISTRATA. See! here's another coming out for her flax! Come back again hither.

SECOND WOMAN. But by Artemis, I will return instantly, when I have barked it.

LYSISTRATA. Bark indeed! for others will wish to do the same.

(*A third Woman appears.*)

THIRD WOMAN. But I am not even able to sleep in the Acropolis since I once saw the serpent, the guardian of the house.

SECOND WOMAN. And I unhappy, am destroyed with want of sleep through the owls which are continually crying "To who."

LYSISTRATA. My good woman, cease from your tricks. You long for your husband, perhaps; but do you not think that we long for ours? But hold out, my friends, and persevere still further for a short time! For we have an oracle that we shall prevail unless we be weakened. Now, this is the oracle:—

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Tell us what it says.

LYSISTRATA. Be silent now! "But when the swallows leave their nests and their young, and cover in one place, there shall be a rest from evils."

CHORUS OF WOMEN. The oracle is clear. Let us not give up, for it would be a disgrace, my dearest women, to betray the oracle.

LYSISTRATA. I see a man running in haste.

CALONICE. Where is he? whoever is he? (*All try to see*)

LYSISTRATA. Near the temple of Demeter.

FIRST WOMAN. Zeus! in truth there is a man!  
Who in the world is he?

LYSISTRATA. Look! does any one of you know him?

MYRRHINA. Indeed I do. He is my husband Cinesias.

LYSISTRATA. 'Tis your business to tease him and cheat him, to promise and refuse him, to love him and not love him, and thoroughly torment him, utterly and roast him thoroughly. But do you go.

MYRRHINA. Don't trouble yourself, I'll do so.

LYSISTRATA. I will remain here, and cheat him within.

(Enter CINESIAS leading a child.)

CINESIAS. Ah! Ah, me miserable!

LYSISTRATA. Who is this who stands within the out-posts?

CINESIAS. I.

LYSISTRATA. A man?

CINESIAS. Yes, a man.

LYSISTRATA. Then begone.

CINESIAS. Who are you who drive me out?

LYSISTRATA. A day watcher.

CINESIAS. By the gods, then, call me out Myrrhina!

LYSISTRATA. So I must call out your Myrrhina? Who are you?

CINESIAS. Her husband, Cinesias.

LYSISTRATA. Welcome, thou dearest! for thy name is not without fame among us, not yet inglorious, for your wife constantly has you in her mouth; and if she get an egg or an apple, she says "May Cinesias have this!" Yes, 'tis true. And if we talk of husbands, your wife straightway says that everything else is nonsense compared to her Cinesias.

CINESIAS. Go then, call her.

LYSISTRATA. What will you give me?

CINESIAS. Here, I have this. (*Gives her a ring*) What I have, I give you.

LYSISTRATA. Come then, let me go and call her.

CINESIAS. Hasten then! (*Exit LYSISTRATA*) For I have no pleasure in life since she went away from the house, but am grieved when I go in; and everything appears to me to be desolate; and I find no pleasure in my food when I eat, for I am so lonely.

MYRRHINA. (*Within the gates, to LYSISTRATA*) I love him, I love him, but he is not willing to be loved by me. Do not call me to him.

CINESIAS. My dearest little Myrrhina, why do you act thus? Come down hither.

MYRRHINA. By Zeus, I will not go down thither.

CINESIAS. Will you not come down when I call you, Myrrhina?

MYRRHINA. No! for you call me when you don't want me at all.

CINESIAS. I not in want of you? Nay, rather undone!

MYRRHINA. I will go away.

CINESIAS. Nay, don't, pray! but at least hearken to your little child. (*To child*) Here you, will you not call your mother?

CHILD. Mama! Mama!

CINESIAS. Woman! what are you about? Do you not even pity your little child, being unwashed and unfed for six days past?

MYRRHINA. Of course I pity it; but its father is negligent.

CINESIAS. Come down, my good girl, to your little child!

MYRRHINA. What a thing it is to be a mother! I must descend, for what can I do? (*Enter MYRRHINA*)

CINESAS. Why, she seems to me to have become much younger and more loving to look at; and in that she is cross to me and bears herself haughtily. These are the very things now which attract me.

MYRRHINA. O thou dearest little child of a bad father! Come, let me kiss you! most dear to your mother. (*Fondles child*)

CINESAS. Why, cruel creature do you do this and yield to the other women, and make me unhappy, yourself as well? (*Tries to embrace MYRRHINA*)

MYRRHINA. Don't put your hand on me!

CINESIAS. You are neglecting *our* belongings.

MYRRHINA. I care little about them.

CINESIAS. Little about your thread which is being tossed about by the cocks and hens?

MYRRHINA. Just so.

CINESIAS. Will you not go back?

MYRRHINA. Not I, unless you make peace and cease from war.

CINESIAS. Therefore if it seems good to you, we will e'en do so.

MYRRHINA. Therefore if it seems good to you, I will e'en return. But now I have sworn not to do it.

CINESIAS. Ah! do come home with me!

MYRRHINA. Well then, wait until I get my mantle. (*Runs off and returns with mantle, thrusting it into his arms*)

CINESIAS. Come now—are you ready?

MYRRHINA. Oh! I have forgotten my veil.

(*Same business with veil*)

CINESIAS. Oh, haste! do not delay so.

MYRRHINA. There, I have left behind my mirror! (*Same business*)

CINESIAS. Will the woman never be ready?

MYRRHINA. And there are my jars of unguents! (*Same business*)

CINESIAS. Now are you at last ready?

MYRRHINA. (*Eluding his burdened arms*) Do you take these home, and perhaps I'll follow—tomorrow! if you make the peace! (*Exit MYRRHINA through the gate, into the citadel*)

CINESIAS. Oh, wretched me! how can I live longer alone!

CHORUS OF MEN. Indeed thou are afflicted! how I pity you for the conduct of your abominable wife!

CINESIAS. Not so, but dearest and sweetest of all. (*Exit CINESIAS*)

CHORUS OF MEN. Abominable certainly!

(*Enter AMBASSADOR from SPARTA.*)

AMBASSADOR. (*Pompously*) Where is the Senate? the committee? I wish to make an announcement.

COMMITTEE-MAN. (*stepping forward*) Here am I, Committee-man! what is it?

AMBASSADOR. By the two Gods, I come from Sparta as Ambassador.

COMMITTEE-MAN. How are affairs at Sparta?

AMBASSADOR. In greatest distress! All the women have left their husbands, and will not return 'till peace be made.

COMMITTEE-MAN. 'Tis a conspiracy among all the women of Greece! Let us at once treat for peace, for we cannot live thus.

CHORUS OF MEN.—

An angry woman rages more fierce than wildest beasts;  
Her wrath is like the fire—by words (like oil) increased.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.—

But since you know my failing, why rouse my passions so?

For “quick to wrath” is “quick to love,” as you my friend should know.

CHORUS OF MEN.—

In the words of the poet,

(The excerpt, you know it?)

“All women I hate” runs the verse.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.—

That's just as you please.

But coatless you'll freeze,

And foolish you look—which is worse.

(*The WOMEN here put mantles on the MEN.*)

CHORUS OF MEN.—

How grateful feels this mantle warm!

I stripped it off 'mid anger's storm.

LEADER OF WOMEN'S CHORUS.—

If you but knew how the mantle improves you!

Manly you look, and sedate, as behooves you.

Had you not vexed me, I'd gladly take out

The gnat in your eye, which is painful, no doubt.

LEADER OF MEN CHORUS.—

It's pained for some time, and it must have been that!

My ring has an eye-stone—'twill capture the gnat.

LEADER OF WOMEN CHORUS.—

I suppose I'll have to do it

Though I find you very cross! (*Uses eyestone*)

Gracious! but the gnat's a monster!  
(*Solicitously*) Feel you better for the loss?

LEADER OF CHORUS OF MEN.—

Zeus the Protector! but what a relief!  
My eye has been paining me quite past belief!  
See how my tears come pattering down.

LEADER OF WOMEN.—

Here, let me dry them with folds of my gown.  
Now you're as clean as a sweet little lad;  
I'd just love to kiss you, although you're so bad.

LEADER OF MEN. Do not kiss me, no! no! no!

LEADER OF WOMEN. But I will now, see, just so!

(*Kisses him*)

CHORUS OF MEN.—

In wrath or in friendship, you'll have your own way.  
But come, we'll make peace, henceforth from this day.

We both will be patient; let voices unite  
And sing to our friendship, so fair and so bright!

CHORUS OF WOMEN.—

Lovely friendship's fair indeed! we welcome her  
with joy.

In deed and word most earnestly we'll strive not to  
annoy.

To any wanting ready cash, we'll lend as well as  
not;

And if the war be stopped, why then the loan shall  
be forgot.

Our tables groan with viands rich—pray come you  
to the feast;

For bath and ointments take your time, then come,  
the best and least.  
Then march right up nor ask for leave, forgetting  
what has passed;  
You'll find us all within the fort—the gates you'll  
find—shut fast! (*The WOMEN run away,  
laughing*)

COMMITTEE-MAN. Let us summon Lysistrata,  
who alone can make peace between us. But see,  
here she comes herself.

(*Enter LYSISTRATA.*)

CHORUS OF MEN. Hail! O thou bravest of all  
women; now it behoveth thee to be clever, good,  
easy, grave, mild and shrewd. For the chiefs of the  
Greeks, caught by thy charms, have yielded to thee,  
and referred all their grievances to thee in com-  
mon.

LYSISTRATA. Well, the business is not difficult  
if one were to find people eager for peace. But I'll  
soon know. Where is Peace? First take and lead  
forward the Spartans, and not with a hand violent  
or self-willed, as our husbands used unskillfully to  
do, but very affectionately, as is proper women  
should. (*PEACE enters during this speech*) If any  
do not give his hand—him lead by the nose! Come,  
do you also lead these Athenians forward. You,  
Spartan, stand close beside me, and you (*Indicating  
ATHENIAN COMMITTEE-MAN*) on this side, and  
hear my words! I am a woman, it is true; but

sense I have, and "lack not intellect." By having often heard the words of my father and my elders, I have not been ill-educated. I wish to take and chide you gently in common, who though kindred people, are destroying Grecian men and Grecian cities, when barbarians menace you as enemies. One part of my speech is thus far finished.

COMMITTEE-MAN. Pray finish it all, and haste in the doing.

LYSISTRATA. In the next place, Spartan—for I will turn to you—do you not know when the Spartan came hither a suppliant of the Athenians, and sat upon the altars, pale and anxious, begging an army? Messina was pressing upon you, and the god was shaking the earth so that the horrors of earthquake also desolate the land; but Cimon went with four thousand hoplites and saved the whole of Sparta. Would you devastate a land which befriended you?

COMMITTEE-MAN. By Zeus, Lysistrata, Sparta is in the wrong!

SPARTAN AMBASSADOR. We *are* in the wrong: but sin is so tempting.

LYSISTRATA. Do you suppose I shall let you Athenians off? Know you not, when the Spartans in turn came in arms and set you free from the yoke of Thessaly?

SPARTAN AMBASSADOR. I have never seen a better woman!

LYSISTRATA. Why, then, when favors exist on both sides, do you fight? Why do you not make

peace? Come, what's the hindrance?

SPARTAN AMBASSADOR. So we will, if you are willing to restore to us Pylos.

COMMITTEE-MAN. By the Sea, and its gods, we will not!

LYSISTRATA. Give it up to them, good sir!

COMMITTEE-MAN. And what then shall we solicit?

LYSISTRATA. Do you demand another place instead of this?

COMMITTEE-MAN. (*To SPARTAN*) Then do you deliver up this Echinus.

SPARTAN AMBASSADOR. No, by the two Gods, not all, my good sir!

LYSISTRATA. Give them up; do not dispute about trifles! Enter into the Acropolis, give oaths and assurances to each other; and then each of you shall take his own wife and depart.

ATHENIAN COMMITTEE-MAN and SPARTAN AMBASSADOR. Agreed!

(LYSISTRATA summons the WOMEN out from the citadel.)

LYSISTRATA. Then let husband stand beside wife, and wife beside husband; and then, having danced in honor of the gods for our prosperous fortune, let us be cautious henceforth never to sin again!

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS.—

Lead the chorus, madly dancing,  
Offer thanks to gods above;

All the gods invoke in order,  
Last—and best—the god of love!  
Artemis, the chaste and mighty, hail we as we trip  
    along!  
Hail Apollo! gracious leader of the chorus' dance  
    and song.  
Sparkling eyes of Dionysius hail we 'mid the  
    Maenad train!  
Hail to Zeus, whose lightning flashes bling us, mid  
    the summer rain.  
Hera, ancient spouse and mother, worshipped since  
    the dawn of time  
All the gods we call to witness to this peace, this  
    peace sublime,  
Won through matchless Aphrodite; who can stay  
    all-conquering love?  
Alalai! Io! Paean! Sing the praise of mighty love.  
Io! Io! Aphrodite! Evoe! the god of love!—  
Now, see what sort of a chorus you can sing.

CHORUS OF SPARTANS.—

Spartan muse, desert Taygetus, lovely though her  
    fountains be.  
Let us sing *our* gods and heroes; first, the brave  
    Tyndaridæ.  
Sing those heavenly twins in chorus, lightly bound,  
    and gaily spring!  
Sparta is the nurse of heroes, let her damsels dance  
    and sing!  
Bind your hair, ye lovely damsels! like a stag on  
    mountain-top,  
Spring from peak to peak, and madly raise the

shout, nor let it stop.

OMNES. Alalai! Io! Paean! Sing the praise of  
of mighty love!

Io! Io! Aphrodite! Evoe! the god of love!

CURTAIN.

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